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AN EARNEST  
ADDRESS  
TO  
BOTH HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT,  
ON THE SUBJECT OF THE  
INTENDED APPLICATION  
FOR A  
REFORM  
OF THE  
POLICE ACT.

——  
“ This is enough to be the ruin of lust and late walking through  
“ the kingdom.”

——  
DUBLIN:  
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M.DCC.LXXXVIII.

1788



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~~is forbidden to appear on that school of excel-~~

lence, the stage. We intend your regard to

the following petition: and though we have

little encouragement to hope where the public

is concerned, we cannot doubt of your in-

terest.

**HIS EXCELLENCY THE**

**MARQUIS OF BUCKINGHAM,**

**LORD LIEUTENANT OF THE KINGDOM**

**OF IRELAND, &c.**

**MAY IT PLEASE YOUR EXCELLENCY,**

**T**HE numerous reports which go abroad of your accuracy of inspection into the public œconomy, and the change of fashion you have introduced, strike us with terror. We fear it may reach even to us, and have solid reason for it, when the most delightful repre-



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MODERN HISTORY OF THE KINGDOM  
 OF IRELAND, &c.

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**AN EARNEST**

**A D D R E S S, &c.**

**MAY IT PLEASE YOUR EXCELLENCY,**

**YOUR LORDSHIPS, AND YOUR HONOURS.**

**I**T having come to our ears, that it is the determination of a great number of the wealthy inhabitants of Dublin, to address you for a change in the present Police Act, of happy institution, which your favours long preserve; we the Tag Rag and Bobtail of Dublin, in gang assembled, have unanimously agreed to prefer the following remonstrance; and state the several reasons which have appeared to us as decisive against any alteration whatsoever.

**We**

We had very great apprehensions, that when the city of London had opposed the giving up of the Watch, the city of Dublin would have been as headstrong as they, and maintained their charter and privileges with that obstinacy which the Magistrates of that city did. But the weak assisted the weak, and we were for some time rescued; and the Benefits we, and the rest of our needy brotherhood and sisterhood, have experienced, through the well directed caution of the Police, deserve our best thanks and wishes for the permanence of their present state. To give a just weight to what we alledge, we must lay before you some of the hardships we sustained during the tyranny of Watch-men, and then we can with more effect, as we humbly hope, impress on your minds the good we have at stake.

Our distress arose from two causes. First, the controul of the Watch being in the power of the Church-wardens; and secondly, the troublesome practices of the Watch carrying rattles and lanterns, and bawling out the hour.

The number and power of the Church-wardens, and very often an odd education, which, as far as we can find, many who are called or call them-

felves



selves well-bred gentlemen, are not much acquainted with, have borne hard on us. They were in office so short a time that it was not possible to contrive any lasting means of understanding one another, and what made it still worse, was that in general, all our contrivances would be to little purpose, because they were men that were not in dependance upon any body, and too proud to be forced to favour us, and had an utter aversion to us and our endeavours; because we differed from what they were used to at home, and they seldom looked farther from thence, than to the Church,

It was unsafe to wait for business in a Church-yard, or to look for an open house during divine-service.—Nay, after a long journey, or a hard bout of drinking on a Saturday, we could scarce find the common refreshment of a Whiskey shop open. This however, we do not now complain of, as they are open from morning 'till night, every Sunday in every part of the town, for which we return all due acknowledgments. But the greatest of all the evils was, that even fashion could not have power enough to make them encourage, or even wink at the most useful branch of our community. It is a well known fact, that if it were not for the attention of our

women



women to their business, we should have few indeed, to what we now have in our community; as they regularly train up young apprentices of both sexes, to be more fit for our gang than their own business, in which they have admirable success, and by sauntering about the streets, make good use of those who can't go far from a shop, or carry out much without being discovered. In the good time past, widow gentlewomen, and single gentlewomen, kept their poorer sisters in countenance, and had so much genteel company, that the others fared well by their influence: whereas the Churchwardens, for the sake of their wives and daughters, and apprentices, would make their Watch very often an intolerable grievance to our whole body.

We are now to recite our grievances from the Watch itself; and on this must observe, that being generally in years, and having none of the appetites of youth about them, they were implacable enemies to them in others; and to the great annoyance of our several labours, they used to conduct young women, old women, old men, and children, in the darkest night, and the most remote parts of the town; and we are assured that, upon this very account, many strong and spirited young Bucks have been prevented from giving the most decisive

decisive proofs of their courage, and when we recollect the many fine girls that have been lost to us and the public by such practices, we hope for the better support from young members, as the present mode remedies these effects. The Police Men are very properly the most attentive where there are most people, and of course where most accidents are liable to happen, for we cannot learn that they are to be seen in any of the remote parts of the town, unless it be now and then visiting the whiskey-shops, to keep the people quiet there, when there is a fray in the street; and in this they are certainly very prudent, as they might otherwise be obliged to take up some of their friends or relations, or at least to endanger the rusting of their muskets, and they serve themselves at the same time, by taking a dram extraordinary, on account to keep out the cold. Thus our way is more undisturbed than they had been ever before, and the good-will of our friends is much assisted, in that there is no place where any one can be sure to find them, or in case they are not found there, to punish them. And in these respects, the stands of the Watch were obnoxious to their good-will, if they had any to us, as well as their appendages. A Watchman was obliged to be known to mind his duty; if he took a nap for convenience, some malicious person or other would overturn his centry-

box, or steal his pole or lanthorn, or play some other knavish trick, that brought him to confusion. If he walked out, his lanthorn was sure to discover him, and people seeing help near, were as sure to make resistance to any civil demand we made on their pockets or persons. They often obliged us to knock them down to prevent them from squalling, at the imminent hazard of our own necks ; whereas now, people yield quietly and civilly, as there is not any appearance of help, and we can punish any obstinate fool without fear of any body coming up, seeing that there is a guard by who takes no notice of us ; for while there is no guard of this guard, we may well think ourselves safe. This security, your wisdom will clearly perceive, we could never have, while the man on duty was always liable to be seen by one whom he could neither trust nor put to rest. Their lanthorns had also another very bad effect, viz. they were obliged to conduct those who applied to them, it made them acquainted with one another's faces in the darkest winter's night, and shewed every gutter and stumbling-stone in the way, so that were a man inclined to be busy by the benefit of an occasional trip of his charge, or by tumbling himself to serve others, he would be certainly sworn to and punished. The inconvenience and danger of murder makes this still worse, for we all know well enough that



that one who once murders cannot escape ; we hate and fear him ourselves, and get rid of him, for our own sakes, as fast as we can, for we never have luck or peace in their company, and it always is sure to bring many of us the sooner to our last speech, by the suspecting and searching every place for the murderer.

The lanthorns were also borne about in the most remote part of the town, so that it was even there easily known if a Watchman was off his duty, a thing happily little attended to now, and if it were, extremely hard to prove ; for a Police-man is not to be seen, unless you come on his bayonet-point unawares, in any thing of a dark night, so that he might knock one down, rob him, and come to his assistance when he was recovering, without any risque of being found out in a distant part of the town. He will stand by in a scuffle, and keep himself out of the way 'till it is over, on pretence that he was at another end of the street, or had turned a corner, for how could he be refuted ?— This has frequently been of the greatest use to us. They know the Magistrates themselves could hardly find them, and so they, whom the Watch used to assist, generally come into our hands.

The next grievance in the conduct of the Watch was, their crying the hour ; as their being always

visible in the streets was a constant alarm to us when on business in public, so their bawling injured it no less in private; from the noise they made it was scarce possible but some one or other must be awake once an hour in every house, so that the slight noise of wrenching a shutter, or a door, could not but be heard. The people hearing the Watch thought themselves so safe of assistance, that women would boldly lock the room door, even when we were in the house, and call the Watch through the window; by which means we have often been entirely defeated. We are also assured, that people just come from the country, would for two or three nights after their arrival, be deprived of a great part of their rest by them, and as this must be the case almost always in every house while the families are in town, and therefore their plate and jewels in their houses, we think even yet with heaviness for the losses we have felt on this account; when through drunkenness, sloth, assistance of the servants, or sound sleep of the rest, we might have had glorious booty. As it may be urged, that people who are old and cannot sleep for their aches and pains, find it comfortable to hear how the night passes, we appeal to those who would not wish to know it, and presume we shall have a very great majority in our favour.



As a proof of our security in these days, we can  
 instance a murder committed in a great house in  
 the middle of the city, which must have been at-  
 tended by cries and deliverance if any one had  
 been patrolling by. We are happy that none of our  
 out-riders from the Watch, and our friends  
 and limbs at present may testify.

If crying the hour be of such mischievous effect,  
 the rattles were an additional annoyance; we were  
 no sooner pointed out to the Watch, than they be-  
 gan their infernal clatter to summon assistance, and  
 who durst loiter, if any one saw him at the call? By  
 this means, in spite of counterfeiting sprained  
 ankles, putting out their candles, or being out of  
 breath, there were enough to catch us that were  
 obliged to it by being seen; this, in our present  
 situation, is easily to be avoided, as we have already  
 shewn.

We likewise highly approve of the mode of  
 arming the Police-men. The poles being furnish-  
 ed with a far more dangerous weapon than a mus-  
 quet, because men would be much less scrupulous in  
 making use of it; the hook was likewise dangerous,  
 because they would catch a man, who was too  
 strong



strong for the grasp, with it, at some distance ; but when the musquet must be used, a man of any conscience would not, unless it were for murder, run the chance of having another's blood upon him. That this is the case, the number of our bruises from the Watch, and our sound heads and limbs at present may testify.

In fine, we hope from what hath been said it will fully appear, that the Parish Watch under the direction of Churchwardens, was dangerously regulated for the prevention of our success in any and every line ; and that during the time of the Police, we could have little fear of prevention, as seldom to fail ; it being a maxim with us, that if we can once effect our purpose, there is every chance of escaping in our favour ; for which benevolent purpose the Police are admirably formed. We offer a few more circumstances to your consideration, which we (with all deference) think must have some influence on your decision.

The attachment to liberty and property, which has ever been the distinguishing mark of our community, is too conspicuous to need a long comment. We have made more sacrifices to the public good, than all the rest of the nation put together, and deriving

riving from thence all our emoluments, we hope  
 that all they who do the same will think charitably  
 of us. We are conscious that it is not against us  
 the Watchman's crook was converted into the Po-  
 lice-man's bayonet. As we are unacquainted with  
 the labour of the hands, and with the chilling  
 hearths of those who are, we have never risen to  
 provoke you to anger, by crying for mercy or  
 relief; nay, we have ever punished those who did,  
 by pillaging their rags, and alluring their children  
 to our society, or sending them out of the king-  
 dom; our hand has not spared, nor our eye pitied  
 them. For checking their insolence we revere the  
 Police, and acknowledge their activity in the day,  
 and peace in the night. We thank the Magistrates  
 of Dublin for that acquiescence which has given  
 us repose so long, and hope that they will persevere  
 in the same; and that the representations now  
 making to your high assemblies, will be of no  
 effect.

Such are the motives which have urged us to  
 send up the present petition, and we hope that our  
 cause is stated with all respect, as it is with all  
 truth; being drawn up by a select committee, who  
 have been well brought up, and have read novels  
 before and since they were of our community;

and

and the said petition being read to us, we have unanimously agreed to the presentation in due form, and relying on your clemency, we supplicate your continuation of it. And your Petitioners, as in duty bound, will ever pray, &c.

lice-man's paymen.  
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